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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7554
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 5320
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 9257
RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 6483
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3616
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 3876
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 5495
RUEHQ/AMEMBASSY QUITO 6240
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0937
RHMF/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHEHN/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC 1322
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 1151

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 001179

SIPDIS

WHA/CCA; WHA/AND FOR SHELBY SMITH-WILSON, MOISES BEHAR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/23/2018

TAGS: ETRD ETTC PREL BL ECON CU

SUBJECT: BOLIVIAN-CUBAN RELATIONS: LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. SECSTATE 52541
1B. 07 LA PAZ 3152

Classified By: A/DCM Mike Hammer for Reasons 1.4(b),(d.)

11. (U) The following responses are keyed to the questions in ref A and reflect only new developments since ref B.

12. (C) Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba?
- No, the Bolivian government continues to see Cuba as a path to take, not a problem to fix. Independent of the government, there was a rally for Cuban Solidarity day held in Bolivia.

13. (C) Has the host country made other public statements or undertaken governmental actions ... or actions in support of civil society in Cuba through host country's diplomatic missions or other fora?

- No. Government officials in Bolivia are supportive of actions taken by Fidel Castro. Bolivian president Evo Morales considers him an advisor and "a very wise man."

14. (C) Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and host country in the past six months?
- Yes, Morales has visited Cuba in the past six months, with the most recent being May 21 for Cuban Solidarity day. That afternoon, Morales flew to Caracas where a memorandum of understanding was signed between Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia.

- The Cuban Ambassador to Bolivia Rafael Dausa occasionally speaks on the Bolivian-US diplomatic situation, usually critiquing the United States for alleged involvement in Bolivian sovereign affairs. He made a statement May 18 saying that the U.S. might be funding the campaign against Evo Morales in his August 10 recall referendum. "It wouldn't surprise me, because when there is a legitimate government, a revolutionary government, a government that defends its people, the U.S. government takes care of attacking it, of lying, of campaigning against it," Dausa said.

15. (C) What is the nature of investments that host country businesses have in Cuba?

- Bolivia still has no significant investments in Cuba.

16. (C) Are there any bilateral trade agreements between host

country and Cuba?

-Cuba and Bolivia have not made any new agreements since signing a "Complementary Economic Agreement" November 21, 2007 (ref B). The two countries remain bound by their 1995 Economic Cooperation Agreement and the "People's Trade Agreement" with Venezuela (ALBA.) Despite a series of publicized bilateral agreements and trade fairs under the Morales administration, trade between Cuba and Bolivia remains relatively insignificant. Bolivian exports to Cuba totaled approximately \$100,000 for 2007 and again consisted of cooking oil and varied chocolate goods.

--There have been no high level meetings between Bolivian and Cuban officials regarding trade. Dr. Javier Hurtado replaced Celinda Sosa as Minister of Production and Micro-Management and has yet to make any trips to Havana.

--The establishment of state-run airline Boliviana de Aviacion (BOA) is still underway, with Venezuela and Cuba as key partners. The Director of BOA had originally told Emboff that a June 2008 launch was anticipated, but it seemed unrealistic given their stage of planning and that they had yet to purchase any aircraft. BOA confirmed that a major international route will be La Paz-Caracas-Havana.

¶7. (C) Are there any exchange programs between host country and Cuba?

- Almost 2,000 Cuban doctors are still sent throughout Bolivia. Complaints concerning Cuban doctors' lack of training and equipment are still being reported.

- The Cuban plan to eliminate illiteracy in Bolivian territory by September 2008 under the campaign "Yes I can!" continues throughout Bolivia. The program is consistently praised by Evo Morales, who often holds a ceremony for areas that are considered literate by the program. More than 100 Cuban literary advisors are aided by Venezuelan logistical and equipment support.

- Cuba offers limited scholarships to Bolivian students seeking to study at Cuban universities and claims more than 5,000 Bolivian medical students. Bolivian media report two Bolivian students dying under mysterious circumstances in Cuba, although both the Cuban and Bolivian government have denied any irregularities. The family of one student demanded an investigation after the students corpse was returned with his internal organs removed. The Bolivian government denied the request.

¶8. (C) COMMENT. The Morales government looks up to the Cuban government. The most recent visit by Evo to visit Raul Castro indicates Evo's continued dedication to Castro family values, regardless of which brother is holding the reins. The Venezuelan link remains crucial as Cuba, bolstered by subsidized Venezuelan oil, sends medical and literacy assistance to Bolivia with heavy Venezuelan logistical support. Venezuela and Cuba can be expected to exercise considerable influence in Bolivia so long as Evo Morales remains in power. END COMMENT.

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